

Western Hospitality Services has joined us in participating in the Green Office Program!

47% of Canada's plastics companies are located in Ontario.



In 2013, Canadians bought more than 2.4 million litres of bottled water. Using reusable bottles will help reduce plastic waste.

Would you like to find a restaurant that will refill a water bottle for free? Follow the link below to learn more about local organizations which are committed to sustainability.

<http://bit.ly/1H7IOiz>

This summer, the Dean's Office has shown its enthusiasm for sustainability by taking part in the Healthy Commute Week, completing a sustainability survey, attending a lunch and learn, and launching the D.O. Sustainability Newsletter. These efforts flourished thanks to your commitment and participation. We can now build on these accomplishments and look towards our next success.

Starting on July 7th, we will be joining the Green Office Program. This is a project created by Facilities Management which awards points for implementing proven sustainability initiatives. Upon completion, we will be issued a certification ranging from Bronze to Platinum, based on our performance.

Next week's newsletter will officially kick off our Green Office Program by outlining some first steps. This week's topic however, will highlight some important research, being performed by our new Director of the Centre of Environment and Sustainability.



## Not So Fantastic Plastic



Plastic is a low cost and durable product. This means that there is no shortage of it, and when it finds its way into an ecosystem, it's very hard to break down. It is not yet clear how much of a problem plastic pollution is in our cherished Great Lakes, but Dr. Patricia Corcoran, an Associate Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences, has been working hard to find out.

Corcoran's research, which examines plastic debris along Lake Huron, was a first for freshwater ecosystems. In conducting field work, she was able to find a blob of plastic debris about the size of 25 meters of sidewalk lining the shoreline of Humber Bay.

When these plastic products enter lakes as small particles, they are mistakenly consumed by animals within the ecosystem. A recent study has shown that plastic fibres are accumulating in fish from Lake Erie. This is a troubling fact, considering that approximately 65 million pounds of fish are harvested from the Great Lakes every year.



Corcoran and her team are working to identify so called "plastic hotspots" to help understand the ways in which these materials are entering the Great Lakes. By

working with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Corcoran's research might one day help prevent the entry of plastic particles into our waterways and safeguard this important natural resource.

